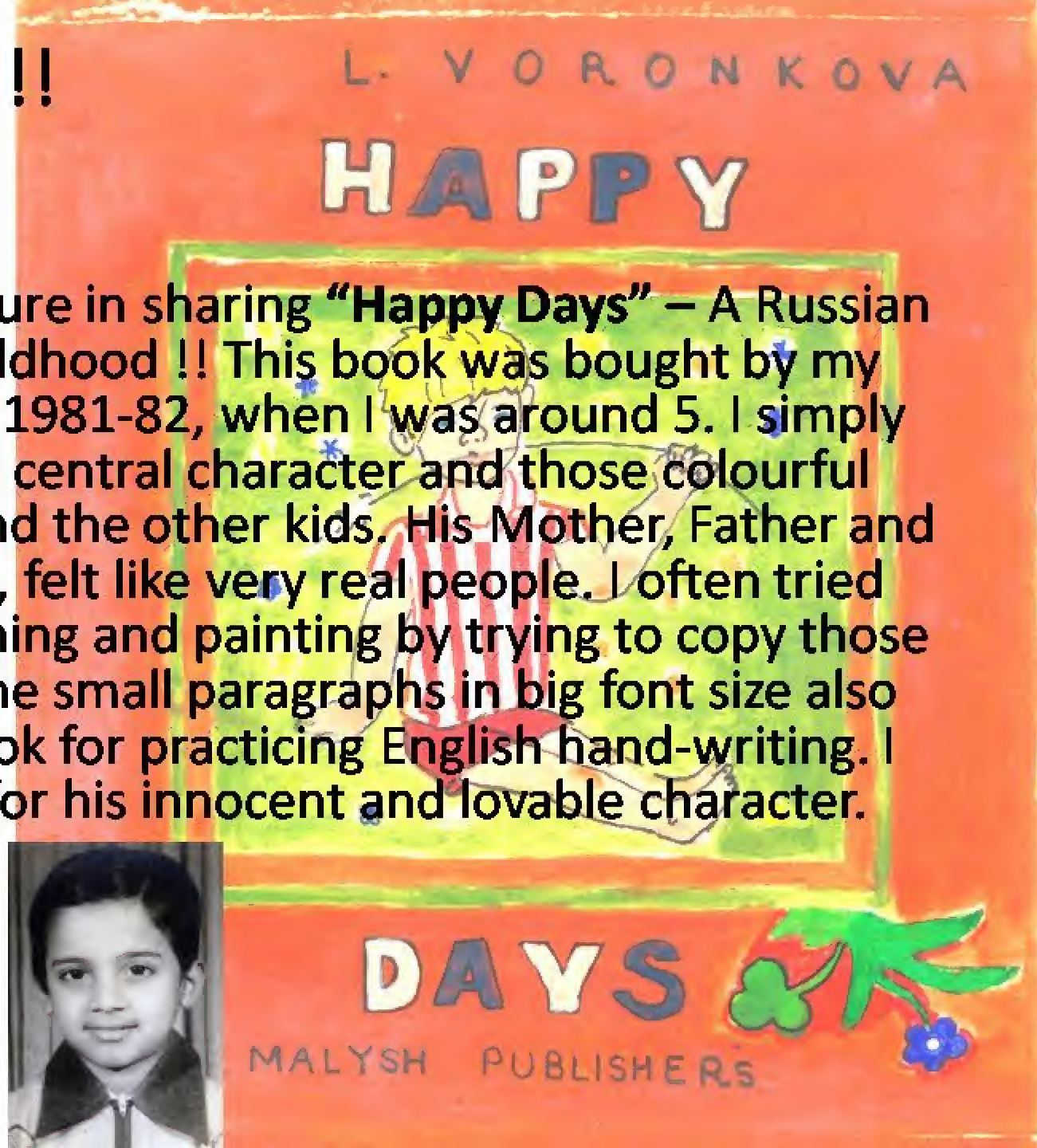


Hello Dears !!
Hurraah !!

I have great pleasure in sharing “Happy Days” – A Russian book from my childhood !! This book was bought by my parents for me in 1981-82, when I was around 5. I simply loved Vanya – the central character and those colourful pictures of him and the other kids. His Mother, Father and Grandmother too, felt like very real people. I often tried my hand at sketching and painting by trying to copy those lovely pictures. The small paragraphs in big font size also served as copybook for practicing English hand-writing. I still adore Vanya for his innocent and lovable character.

Vineel V Bhurke
24th October, 2012





L. VORONKOVA & HAPPY DAYS

L. VORONKOVA

HAPPY



DAYS

MALYSH PUBLISHERS

hotcake and ran outside to wait for Mommy. A car drove up as he reached the porch.

"Mommy's back!" he shouted. The car stopped. Mommy was sitting beside the driver. She got out of the car, and Vanya ran up to her. Mommy hugged him.

"Hello, darling! Are you all right? Are you well?"

(Mommy went inside and greeted Daddy and Grandma. Then she kissed Vanya again and said, "See how quickly the week went by?")



A LIVE LANTERN

Daddy was late coming home from work. Vanya went to meet him, and they walked through the dense birch copse together.

(By then it was dark. The trees were nodding above the narrow path. The flowers in the clearings had closed their petals and gone to sleep.) You could not tell now whether they were red or blue, though the white flowers looked like tall candles and seemed to glow in the dark.



Vanya hurried along, trying to keep up with Daddy. Daddy would take one step, and Vanya would take three, but still he kept dropping behind.)

"It's dark here," Vanya said. "I can't see the path. We might get lost."

"Don't worry. We won't."

Vanya wanted to say, "Don't walk so fast, Daddy! I can't keep up with you, and it's scary walking behind." But he said nothing, although he hoped Daddy would stop.

Indeed, he did stop.

"You said it's dark. Well, here's a little lantern to light your way."





Vanya came closer.

"Where's the lantern?"

"Here. Can't you see it? It's glowing in the grass."

Vanya looked hard. Then he saw the light. A tiny green light, as tiny as a spark, was glimmering in the dark grass.

"Pick it up carefully so's it won't go out," Daddy said.

Vanya picked up the green spark together with a handful of grass. The grass was wet from the evening dew, but still the little light glowed on. Vanya walked along, carrying it gingerly.

"Well? Is it lighter now?" Daddy asked.

The green spark was not even bright enough to light his hands, but Vanya felt the path was lighter. When they reached home Vanya shouted from the

porch, "Mommy! Grandma! Look at the lantern we found!"

He ran into the house, opened his hands and said, "Look!"

"My eyes must be failing," Grandma said. "I don't see any lantern."

"Neither do I," Mommy said. "All I see is grass."

Vanya held his hands up closely, but all they saw was grass.

"I must've lost it," he whispered. There was a lump in his throat, but Vanya was a brave boy. He clenched his teeth, blinked hard and didn't cry.

"It might still be here. Let's see if we can find it," Daddy said.

They spread the grass out on the table, the wet little leaves and blades from the woods.





All of a sudden Vanya said, "Look, there's a worm here!" He wanted to throw out the dark little worm that was hiding in the grass.

"Wait a minute," Daddy said. "That's your lantern. Let's see how it shines in the dark."

Vanya turned off the light. The room became dark. They all looked for the green light.

"I can't see a thing," Grandma said.

Then Mommy said, "It's just a handful of grass. That's all it is."

"Shh. Don't make any noise," Daddy said. "The glowworm got frightened and turned off its light. As soon as it feels safe, it'll turn it on again."

They sat around the table in silence and waited. A minute passed, and then another, and a third.

Suddenly a tiny little forest light went on among the wet blades and leaves. A little green spot glowed in the darkness.

"There it is! I can see it now," Grandma said.

"So can I. You and Daddy found a glowworm," Mommy said.

Vanya was so glad and so proud he had brought home such a wonderful surprise. He looked at the glowworm and laughed. Then he asked,

"Where does its light come from, Daddy?"

"I don't know. We'll have a closer look at it in the daylight tomorrow, and maybe we'll find out."

"It's getting late," Mommy said and turned on the light. "It's time for supper."

(Vanya gathered up the grass and the glowworm. He put everything into a box. In the morning he and Daddy would surely find out where the glowworm got its light.)

But when Vanya opened the box the next morning the glowworm was gone. All he found was grass and leaves. The live lantern had crawled away, and so Vanya couldn't find out how it turned on its light, how it turned it off, or where the light came from.

But in a little while, when Vanya gets older and goes to school, he'll certainly find the answers in a book.



GRANDSON VANYA



The Argument

Vanya and Dunya both decided to visit Granny. Dunya came by first. She crossed the yard and then saw Vanya right behind her. Dunya stopped.

"Why'd you come to my granny's house?" she said.

"Why'd you come?"

"Because she's my granny."

"No, she isn't. She's mine."



Granny heard them arguing and came out onto the porch.

"Goodness! What are you arguing about? Your daddy's my son, Dunya. That means you're my granddaughter."

"There! See?" Dunya said.

But Granny continued, "And Vanya's mother is my daughter. That means you're my grandson, Vanya. So you see, you're both right."

"But I'm Granny's favorite granddaughter. My mommy says so, too!" Dunya said and went inside.

Vanya didn't know what to say. He just stood there blinking his blue eyes at Granny.

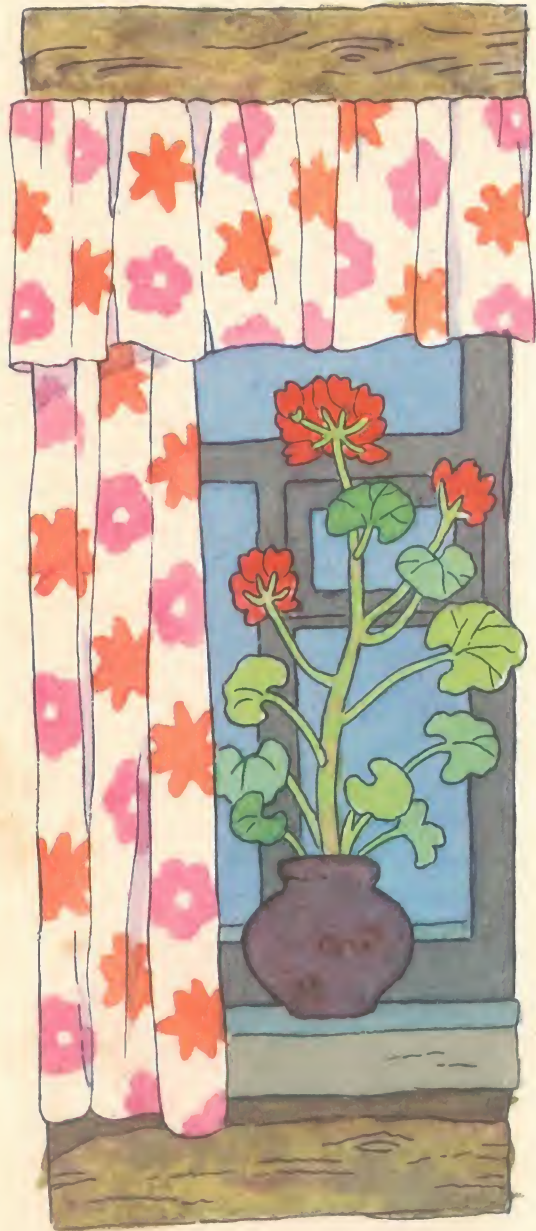
"Come, Vanya. Come into the house," Granny said.

Vanya followed her in. Dunya was already sitting at the table.

Sugar Buns

Granny's big room was very cheerful. There were bright curtains on the windows and potted red geraniums on the windowsills.

The wall clock had a brass pendulum. It kept swinging back and forth, flashing sun-spots on the walls.



"Did you bake any sugar buns today, Granny?" Dunya asked. "Because it's Sunday."

"Why, certainly. Of course, I did."

Granny took a large plate covered with a linen napkin from the shelf. She took off the napkin. Underneath were lovely, golden-brown sugar buns. Dunya grabbed one.

"Oh! It's yummy! Give me another one," she said.

"You haven't eaten this one yet."

"So what? I have room for more."

"Eat it in good health," Granny said. "What about you, Vanya? Here, take one."

"I'm not hungry. I had my breakfast."

But Granny picked out the largest, sweetest bun

and gave it to him. "What a child! He always has to be coaxed!" she said. "That was breakfast, and that was long ago."

"Can't you see he doesn't want any?" Dunya said. "I have room for five more. Maybe even ten!"

Granny made Vanya sit down at the table.

"I didn't come for sugar buns," he said.

"I know," Granny replied. "I know why you came. You want to hear a story. But have a bun anyway."

A Favorite Granddaughter

The brass pendulum was swinging back and forth, flashing sun-spots on the walls. It was swinging, and







that meant it was moving the hands of the clock and telling time. When both hands reached the number "12" the clock began to strike. Bong! Bong! Bong!

"The cows are waiting for me. It's time for me to go to work now," Granny said.

Dunya couldn't bear to part with the buns. She sounded cross when she said,

"Why do you keep on working, Granny? You're old, and you shouldn't be working."

"Who says so? Do you mean that it's your idea?" Granny was very surprised.

"No. That's what my mommy says. My mommy says, 'Why should Granny be working? She's provided for, but she still keeps on working at her age.'"



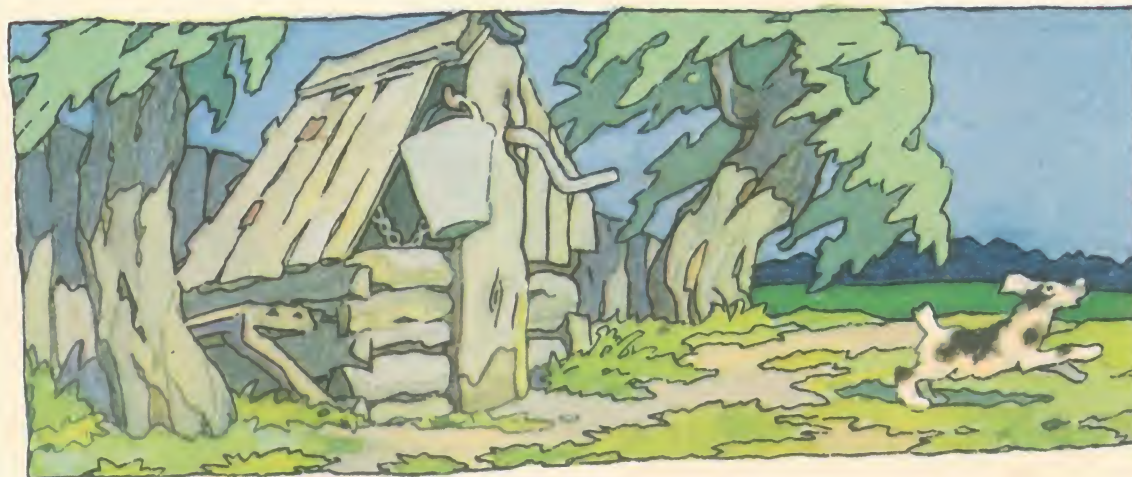
Granny put on a clean white apron and a white kerchief.

"I'm not as young as I used to be, but I'm still going strong," she said. "And while I am, I like to work."

"But you get a pension, Granny. What do you need so much money for?"

"It's not a matter of money, dear. It's a matter of how I want to live. What would my life be without my work? Even a bird works, and I'm certainly no worse than a bird. Come, children. It's time for me to leave."

"But what about the buns, Granny?" Dunya pouted. "I only had three!"



"Take as many as you like."

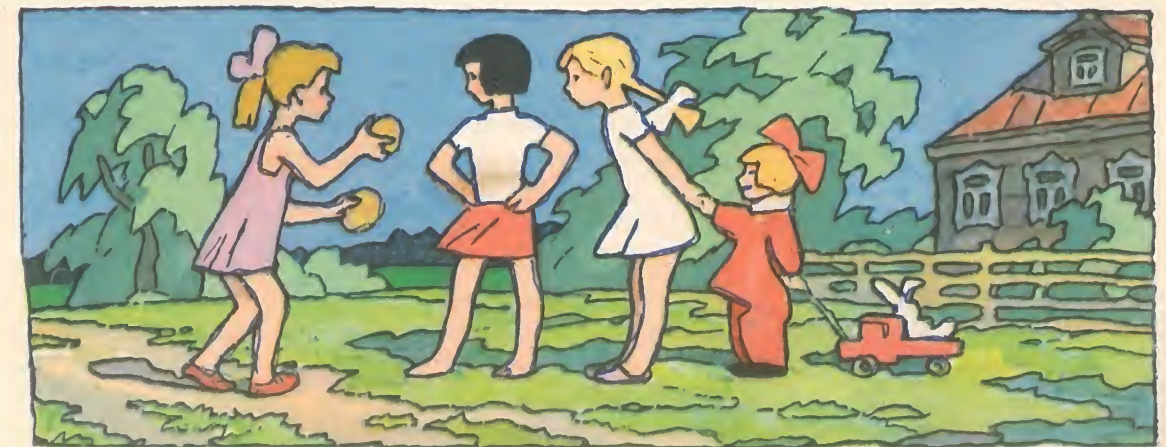
Dunya took two more, one for each hand. Then she took a third and put it in her pocket. She had no place to put any more.

"Go on, take some, Vanya," Granny said.

But Vanya went straight to the door. "I don't want any more. I want you to have some left over for supper."

They all went outside. Dunya saw her friends and ran to them, shouting,

"See how many sugar buns my granny gave me! But she didn't give Vanya any. That's because I'm her favorite granddaughter!")





Cow Stories

Dunya stayed to play with her friends, but Vanya went along to the meadow with Granny.

The sun was high in the sky, just like a yellow sunflower.

Granny and Vanya walked down the soft dirt road through the field of rye. Vanya was barefoot. Pink clover and blue cornflowers grew at the edge of the road.

"Now tell me a cow story, Granny," Vanya said.

"I've told you these stories so many times you're probably sick and tired of hearing them."

"No, I'm not."

"Well then, listen."

And this is the story she told him.



“There’s a cow named Beauty. She’s called Beauty, because she’s a beautiful cow. Her coat gleams like silk. Her horns are set high on her head. She’s very proud of her beauty. She wasn’t giving much milk, though, so one day I said to her,

“Listen, Beauty, a cow’s beauty is not in its horns or pride. A cow’s beauty is in its milk. Brownie is not as fine-looking as you, but she gives much more milk.”

“Beauty looked at me and mooed. This is what she said:

“If you could choose, would you really choose Brownie instead of me?”

“Yes, I would. We should all work hard at what we do best. And you’re not doing a good job at all. Do you think you’re a bird of paradise for us to admire you?”

“Beauty thought this over and then said:



“I’m a big cow, and I need more food. If I get more food, I’ll give you more milk.”

“Now that was more like it. From then on I started giving her more hay every evening. And she gave me more milk.”

“And that’s the end of the story.”

“Now tell me about Brownie.”

“All right.”

And Granny told him a story about Brownie.

“Brownie is a small cow. She’s all brown and is not very good-looking. Her horns lie flat against her head. And she’s very touchy. But she gives a lot of good, rich milk. One day I started milking her, but there was no milk, so I said,

“‘Why won’t you give me any milk, Brownie?’

“She snorted and said, ‘I just won’t.’



“‘Why not? I take care of you, and now you say you won’t give me any milk. That’s not nice, is it?’

“‘You’re not nice, either. You gave Beauty a chunk of bread, and you patted her. But there was nothing for me. That’s why I’m not going to give you any milk.’

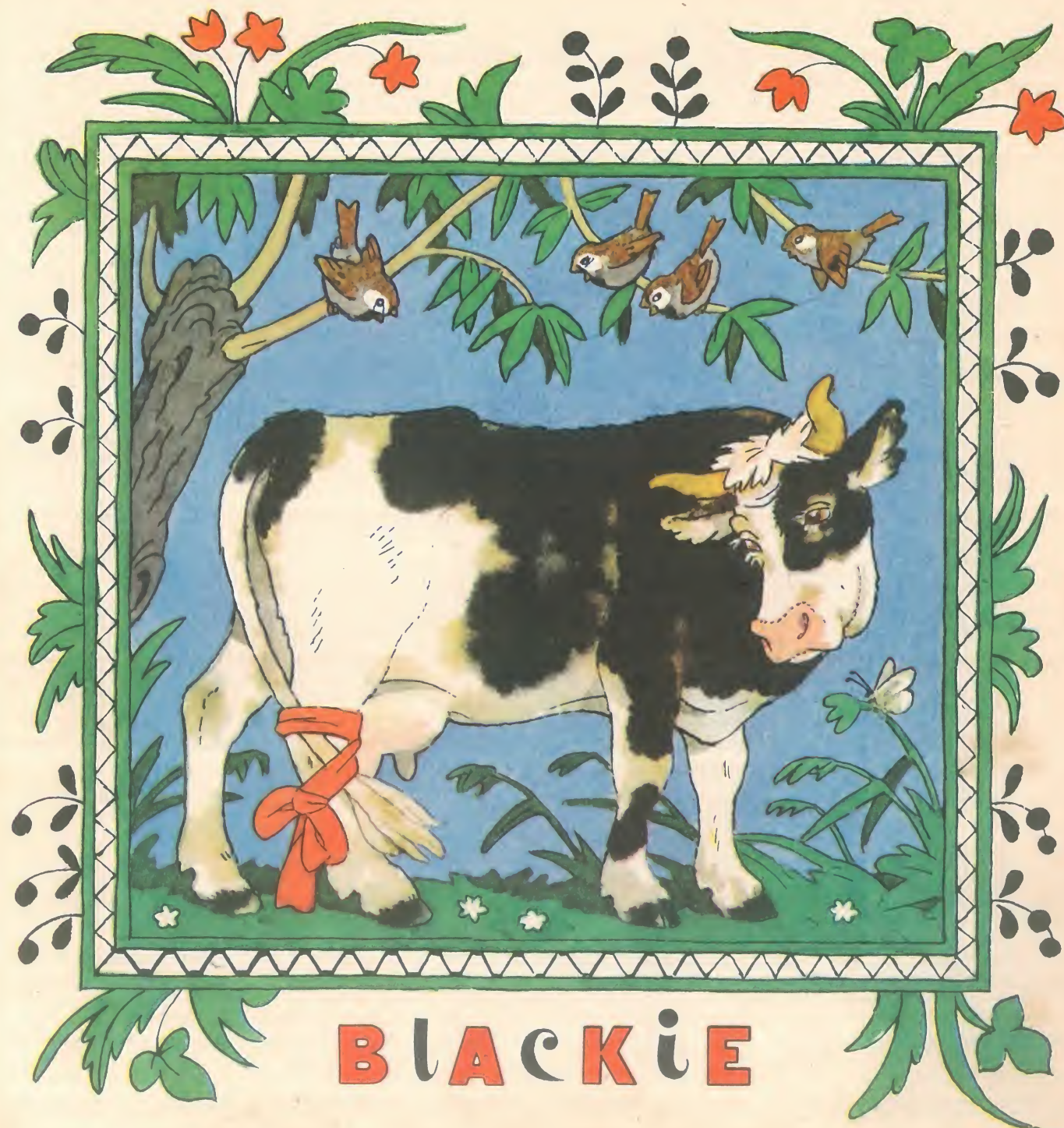
“And you know, she was right! I had forgotten all about the bread I had for her. It was in my pocket.

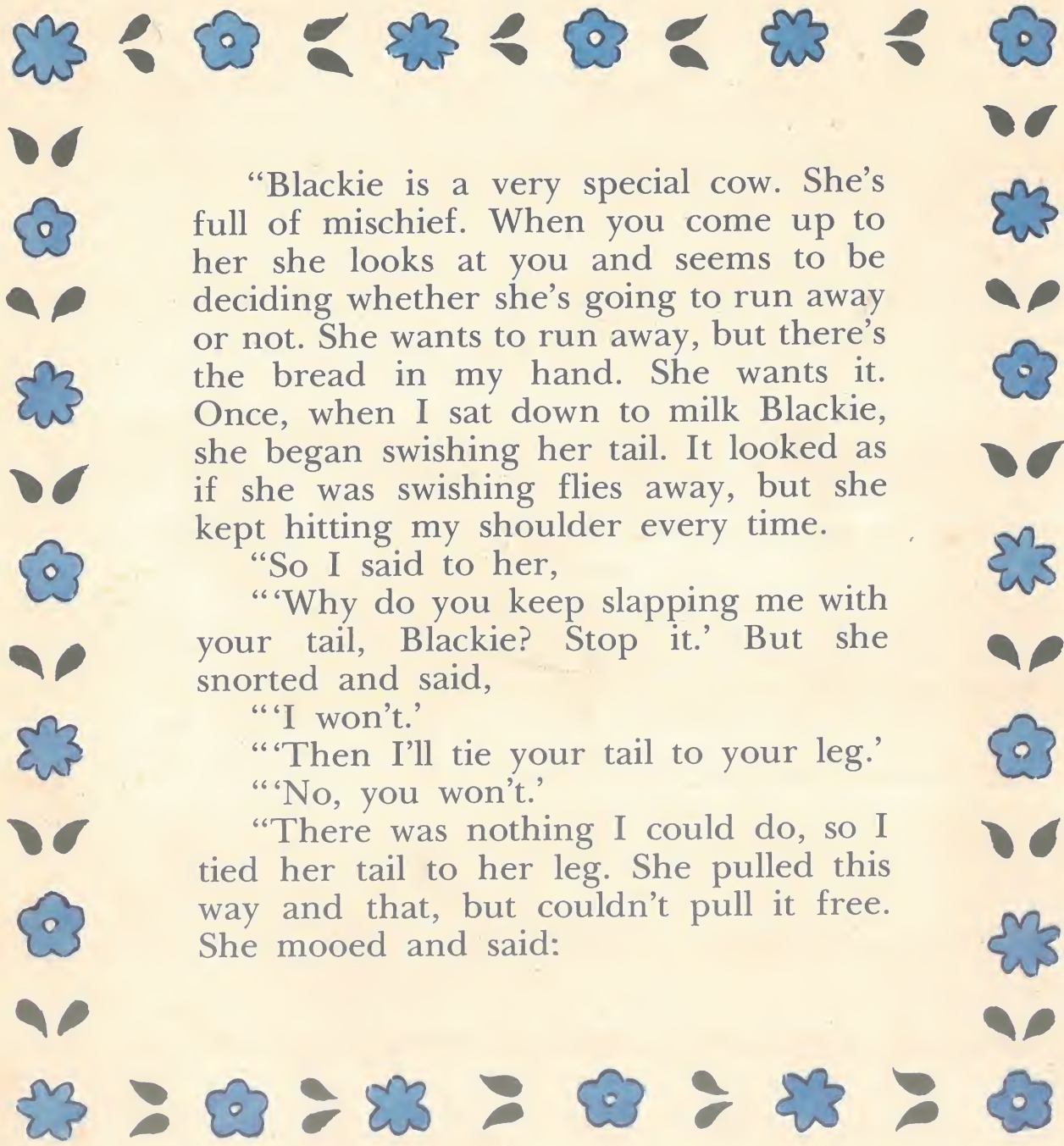
“‘Here’s you share, Brownie. I’m awfully sorry. I brought it just for you. I’ll pat you and scratch your head. Let’s be friends again.’

“‘All right. But next time don’t forget.’

“I haven’t. See the bread in my pocket? It’s for her. And that’s the end of the story.”

“Now tell me about Blackie.”





"Blackie is a very special cow. She's full of mischief. When you come up to her she looks at you and seems to be deciding whether she's going to run away or not. She wants to run away, but there's the bread in my hand. She wants it. Once, when I sat down to milk Blackie, she began swishing her tail. It looked as if she was swishing flies away, but she kept hitting my shoulder every time.

"So I said to her,

"'Why do you keep slapping me with your tail, Blackie? Stop it.' But she snorted and said,

"'I won't.'

"'Then I'll tie your tail to your leg.'

"'No, you won't.'

"There was nothing I could do, so I tied her tail to her leg. She pulled this way and that, but couldn't pull it free. She moored and said:

"'If you untie my tail, I won't slap you any more.'
"That's how I made Blackie behave. And that's how we get along: I'm gentle with one cow, have to coax another, and the third has to have her tail tied to her leg.'")

"Now tell me about Bright Star."

"No. You've had enough stories for now, Vanya. Look, there's the herd."

A Magic Word

The herd was resting under the willows by the river. The cows were dozing in the shade.

Soon the milkmaids came to the meadow and awakened the cows. When the women saw Vanya they said to Granny,

"Is that our new helper?"

"Is he going to be our new shepherd?"

"No, no. This is my grandson Vanya," Granny said.

The women laughed and teased, pretending they didn't know that Vanya was Granny's grandson.

Then Granny said, "I'm going to milk the cows. You go down to the river for a dip, Vanya, but be

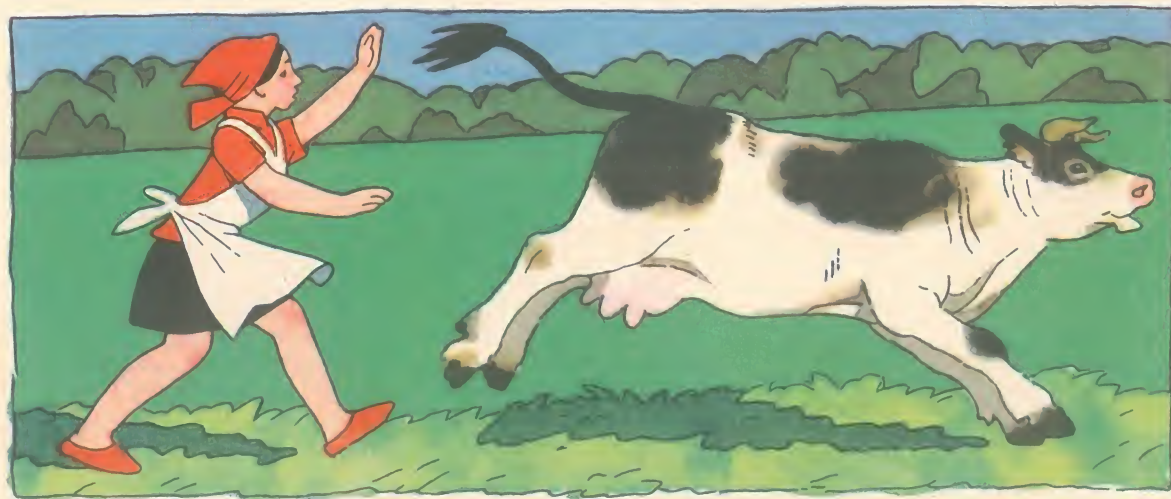


sure you put a burdock leaf on your head, because the sun is very hot."

Vanya went down to the river. He splashed around and played with the tiny fishes. It was very shallow there. There were always lots of tiny fishes where the sun warmed the water through to the very bottom.

If you splash and frighten them they scatter, shooting out in all directions like tiny silver arrows. But if you stand very still they'll soon come back and swim around your ankles. That's how they play.

Vanya picked some green stalks of sedge that



grew in the water near the bank. He found a burdock by the bushes and broke off a leaf for a hat. Then he sat down under the willows and braided the sedge.

Uncle Andrei, the shepherd, was lying beside him in the shade. His cap was pulled down over his eyes. He was sleeping.

All of a sudden there was a great commotion. A milk pail clattered. Matryona, one of the milkmaids, shouted and began to scold,

"You beast! I hope the wolves eat you!"

Matryona slapped her cow. Spot ran off, making angry noises.

Granny was just through milking Brownie.

"You should never hit a cow, Matryona," she said.

"It's her own fault! She kicked over the pail and spilled the milk. Look at her galloping around! I'll never catch her now. She won't give any more milk today, that's for sure. She's a horrible cow."

"Now, don't carry on like that," Granny said. "Let's get to the bottom of it. A horsefly bit her, and she wanted to kick it off, but kicked the pail by mistake. It wasn't her fault. She didn't do it on purpose. Try to understand her."

Matryona was getting closer to the angry cow.

"Stand still, Spot!" she said.



But Spot rolled her eyes, snorted and was off again.

"She doesn't trust you," Granny said. "You slapped her once, and you might slap her again. Let me talk to her."

Granny went over to Spot, spoke to her gently and scratched her head behind her horns, for cows love to be scratched like that. Then she took a clean cloth from her pocket and wiped Spot's tears, because she was crying.

"There, my dear girl, everything's all right. Don't be angry. It's time to be milked. Come here, Matryona. Spot's not angry any more. And you be good to her."

Matryona came up to Spot and patted her. Then she sat down to milk the cow. The other women gathered around Granny.

"Oh, Granny, why do the cows always listen to you?" one of them asked. Uncle Andrei pushed his cap back on his head and said in a sleepy voice, "That's because Granny knows a magic word."

"Tell us the word!" the women pleaded. "Is it a secret word?"

"It's a very simple one," Granny replied. "You have to understand a cow and respect it. But, most important, you have to love it. That's all the magic there is to it."



Wild Strawberries

Summer is a wonderful time. All the world is green and bright. The meadows are full of flowers. There are white daisies, blue cornflowers and buttercups as yellow as pure gold. This is a time when wild strawberries become red and juicy in the warm clearings in the woods.

The children had gone to the woods for berries. The wild strawberries that grew on little hillocks were very sweet but small. If you looked in the grass, though, you'd find large ones that looked like scarlet earrings. The quicker you were, the more berries you'd have. Dunya was a quick girl, and while the others had only picked half a jar each, she had a jar full of wild strawberries. Vanya was slow. He spent more time wandering around and admiring everything his blue eyes saw.

"It looks like there's a party in the woods today," he was thinking. "All the trees are beautiful. They're stand-

ing so still. And the birds are singing as if they're company and have come to a party. There's always singing at parties."

Soon the children were ready to go home. Each had a jar full of berries. They called to Vanya,

"We're going home, Vanya!"

"Come on! You don't want to be left here all by yourself!"

But Vanya paid no attention to them. He went over to a white birch tree and admired it. Then he saw a mighty oak and went over to it. Then he saw a woodpecker and watched its red head bob as it pecked away.

Vanya wandered on.

Soon all the children were gone, but this didn't frighten him. There was a highway nearby, so he couldn't get lost. Then he noticed that it was getting darker in the woods.

"Oh! It'll soon be dark, and I don't have any strawberries!"

Vanya started hunting for them, but it was hard to find any berries in the twilight in the woods. He only picked about three handfuls, half of which were squashed and the other still green. It was no use. He'd have to go home.

Vanya went to the highway and followed it back to the village.



The herd had just come in from the meadows. The village street was red from the sunset. The roofs were all red on one side, and it looked as if someone had painted a red streak on every birch tree.

Vanya shook the berries in his jar. There weren't many, and they weren't really good berries, but they'd do for tea.



He headed home. All of a sudden he stopped in the middle of the street.

"I'll give half to Granny. She likes berries with her tea," he said to himself.

When he got to Granny's house he saw that Dunya was first again.

"I've brought you some wild strawberries, Granny," she was saying.

Granny was very pleased. "Why, thank you, my pet! Thank you for thinking of your granny."

"Mommy told me to," Dunya said. "So I brought you some."

"Well, thank your mother then."

Then Granny saw Vanya standing shyly in the doorway. "What is it, Vanya?"

"I've brought you some wild strawberries, too."

"Did your mother send you, too?"

"No. I came by myself."

Granny smiled and patted Vanya's blond head. "That's a real present. Thank you, my dear. You've made me very happy."

Dunya pouted. "My strawberries are better than his. His aren't even ripe. They're all green. But mine are sweet and red! We'd have had them ourselves, but Mommy said to take these to you."

"Well, you take them back, my dear, and have them yourselves. I'll have these green ones with my

tea. Go on, do take them." Granny gave Dunya back the berries she had brought.

Dunya was so happy that she ate them all on the way home.

What a Surprise!

The collective farm chairman said, "We have a bonus for our best worker. It's a month's vacation at a seaside resort."

There was a meeting at the farm office. Everyone said that Vanya's grandmother had worked hard all her life and should be the one to go.

Vanya's mommy took him along to see her mother, who was his granny.

"Oh, Mother! I'm so glad you're going to the seashore. Let me help you pack. Tell me if there's anything you want me to wash or iron for you," Vanya's mommy said.

"I'm quite able to get ready and pack by myself."

But Vanya's mommy went over to the chest of drawers and began taking Granny's things out.

Just then Dunya and her mother came in.

"Congratulations," Dunya's mother said. "But won't you feel lonely going so far all by yourself?"

"I won't be lonely. There'll be other people there," Granny replied.

"But they'll all be strangers."

"I can't take my family. There's only one reservation."

"That doesn't matter," Dunya's mother said. "I've just found out that you can take a child along. So, you see, you can take Dunya. It'll be good for both of you. Besides, you'll have your favorite granddaughter there with you."

Granny didn't say anything for a while. She seemed to be thinking it over. Then she said, "We'll see when the time comes."

"But you're leaving in a week!"

"Then we'll decide in a week from now."

Dunya began skipping around the room, shouting,

"I'm going to the seashore with Granny! I'm going to the seashore! But you're staying home, Vanya!"

Vanya said nothing. Oh, how he wanted to go with Granny! More than anything else in the world. But there was nothing he could do. After all, Dunya was Granny's favorite granddaughter. That meant she would go with Granny. He'd miss Granny when she was away.

The days slipped by. Vanya would often come to



see Granny and go to the meadow with her. He would ask her to tell him cow stories, but each day he looked sadder and sadder.

"Why are you so unhappy, Vanya?" Granny asked.

"Because you're going away."

"I'll be back soon."

"It'll be autumn by then. That's not soon."

"You won't be unhappy when I'm away, will you?"

"No. But it's better when you're here. I'll be waiting for you, Granny."

Granny just smiled and shook her head.

Soon the week ended. The family gathered in Granny's house that morning to see her off. Dunya's mother came carrying a small suitcase.

"Here are Dunya's things. Everything you'll need."

"What will I need them for?" Granny asked.

"I don't mean you. I mean Dunya."

"Well, if they're Dunya's things, you'll need them at home."

"What?" Dunya's mother was so surprised she set down the suitcase. "How can Dunya go along with you if she has no clothes?"

"Who said she was going along with me? Did I say I'd take her?"

"But I'm your favorite granddaughter!" Dunya shouted. "Who'll go along with you if not me?"

"He will," Granny said and nodded at Vanya. "Go on, Vanya dear. I know it won't take long to get you packed."

Vanya was so excited he gasped. "Me, Granny? To the seashore? I don't have to pack! I can go in my shorts!"

Granny looked at all of them and shook her head. "Why are you so surprised? Dunya won't even think of me once when I'm away, but Vanya will miss me. So he might as well come along, just as he is, in his shorts. It's hot there anyway."



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